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7 FEATURE

THE ONCE AND FUTURE LAKE STREET

Can the coolest street in Minneapolis be saved?

By Susan Du

4 NEWS

SHORTLIST
Catholic leaders are sharing some very out-there beliefs with their followers

BLOTTER
Longtime, award-winning journalist quits MPR, cites stalled #MeToo story in a public resignation letter

16 A-LIST

OFF-LEASE ART BOX
The space will close permanently after one last dance festival, but the show must go on

17 FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

CROSSWORD

18 CLASSIFIEDS

SAVAGE LOVE

cover credit
Susan Du

Editorial

EDITOR Emily Cassel
WEB EDITOR Jay Boller
NEWS EDITOR Mike Mullen
MUSIC EDITOR Keith Harris
FOOD EDITOR Sarah Brumble
ARTS EDITOR Jessica Armbruster
STAFF WRITERS Susan Du, Hannah Jones
COPY EDITOR Bridgette Reinsmoen
PROOFREADER Bryan Miller
CLUBS EDITOR Erik Thompson

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Jerard Fagerberg, Jay Gabler, Tony Libera, Michael Madden, Erica Rivera, Sheila Regan

Art

ART DIRECTOR Emily Utne
LAYOUT EDITOR Shelby Lano

Production

DESIGN MANAGER Maria Grzywa

Publisher

Mary Erickson

Advertising

SALES DIRECTOR Leah Parkinson

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Leah Carson, Kevin Lenhart, Brian Thunberg

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Frankie Ellingson, Ashley Farlow, Luke Gildemeister, Marie Iannazzo, Jacob Johnston

SENIOR MULTIMEDIA ACCOUNT

EXECUTIVE Mike Yanke

ACCOUNT MANAGERS

Carly Dabroski, Arianna Eady, Danielle Smith

CP Digital

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Kelly Java

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

Alison King

Marketing and Promotions

MARKETING DIRECTOR Holly Hunt

MARKETING COORDINATOR

Emma Engeldinger

Business and Administration

FINANCE MANAGER

Bernadette Botoshe

STAFF ACCOUNTANT Du Nguyen Ho

City Pages

650 3rd Avenue South, Suite 1300,
Minneapolis, MN 55488

PHONE 612.375.1015 **FAX** 612.372.3737

E-MAIL adinfo@citypages.com

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THE STAT SHEET

43-34

Score in the Vikings' season-opening loss to the Packers

42.3

Square-mile chunk of Greenland's ice cap that just broke off, which is... not good

\$1 million

July tourism taxes collected in Duluth, down 25% due to COVID from the same month in 2019

35

Death toll—at least—in the West's wildfires so far

"It's my pillow and I'll cry if I want to."

Reader Danuta Warec responds to "Mike Lindell threatens to sue Anderson Cooper over brutal CNN interview" at citypages.com.

GOD, NO

REV. ROBERT ALTIER and Rev. James Altman—Catholic leaders in Crystal, MN and La Crosse, WI respectively—believe in god. They also have some more... out-there beliefs. (Hey, you can't spell either of their names without "alt.") Altier recently told his congregation that COVID-19 is a man-made hoax, while Altman thinks Catholic Democrats are doomed to hell, an opinion he shared in a YouTube video posted by Alpha News. Priests aren't really supposed to push their political positions on parishioners, and La Crosse Diocese Bishop William Patrick Callahan told the Star Tribune he plans to privately council Altman.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

Mike Lindell threatens to sue Anderson Cooper over **BRUTAL CNN INTERVIEW**

BRAVE TIKTOK LADY survives Walmart in 'downtown Minneapolis' For Minneapolis restaurants and small businesses, a summer of **'ESCALATING' BREAK-INS AND ROBBERIES**

The new Minneapolis-St. Paul **AIRPORT ESCALATOR** is the tallest in Minnesota. Huh.

Inside the **BOYCOTT RHYMESAYERS** movement

EXIT POINT

MPR reporter resigns, cites stalled investigation into allegedly abusive Current DJ

More bad PR for MPR. Days after Minnesota Public Radio sparked online blowback for firing Garrett McQueen, its classical station's only Black DJ, its news division lost veteran reporter Marianne Combs, who says she's resigning to protest leadership's handling of her #MeToo reporting.

Combs—winner of the Society of Professional Journalists' Journalist of the Year award in June for in-depth coverage of sex crimes at Children's Theatre Co.—was working on a story about an allegedly abusive DJ at 89.3 the Current, MPR's sister station. The unnamed employee continues to use “his status as a DJ at the Current to attract and further torment young women,” Combs wrote Monday in an open resignation letter.

Combs's story cleared all the legal

hurdles, she writes, but her bosses kept stalling.

“They described him as ‘a real creep,’ but worried that airing a story about his behavior would invite a lawsuit,” she writes. “While the editors have not gone so far as to cancel the story, they have shown such a complete lack of leadership that I no longer have any confidence they will handle the story appropriately.”

So, citing a need for “leadership, a moral compass and courage,” the 23-year MPR News vet called it quits.

“I’m resigning to show my continued support for these women,” she writes. “Their stories matter, their trauma is real, and the issues their experiences raise are relevant to all women, as well as all parents.”

Duchesne Drew, president of MPR, stands by Combs's editors.

“We were shocked by Marianne Combs's



JEFF WHEELER/STAR TRIBUNE

decision to resign her position at MPR News. That said, I fully support the editors who reviewed her story,” he says in a statement issued to City Pages. “The MPR News editors decided that the story, which deals with complex and sensitive issues, is not ready to run because it does not meet our journalistic standards. In fact, they were blindsided by Marianne’s resignation and expected that she was

continuing to work on the story.”

It’s been a rough few years at St. Paul-based American Public Media, which owns MPR and the Current. It canned iconic host Garrison Keillor in 2017 following allegations of “dozens of sexually inappropriate incidents.” In 2020 alone, more than 40 staffers have been laid off or accepted buyouts; executive pay was trimmed by 20 to 35 percent. —JAY BOLLER

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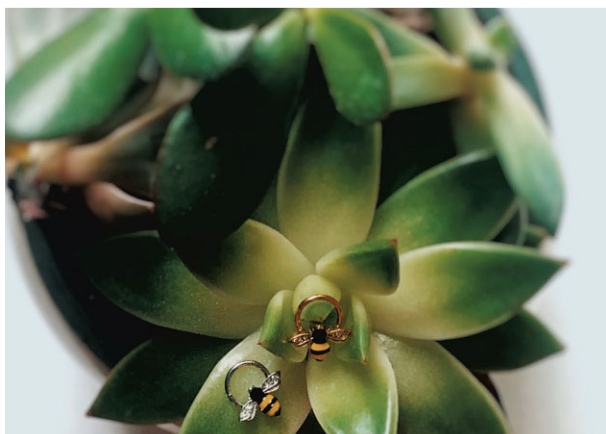
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The Once & Future LAKE STREET

Can the coolest street in Minneapolis be saved?

BY SUSAN DU

I.
On the corner of East Lake Street and Chicago Avenue, Sharon Sayles Belton stared down the cultural corridor that had been the beating heart of Minneapolis.

This was the area the former mayor was elected to represent on the City Council in the 1980s. The adjoining communities of Powderhorn and Phillips are some of the most diverse in Minnesota, low-income but entrepreneurial. And so Lake Street had been an arcade of small shops and mom-and-pop eateries, an incubator of immigrant dreams. Over the years, it also became one of the last authentically cool places left in the rapidly developing city, where culture held its ground against corporate retail and formulaic luxury apartments.

Earlier this summer, protests against Minneapolis police officers' killing of George Floyd exploded into arson and looting along Lake Street, laying waste to priceless infrastructure that Sayles Belton had fought for as a city official.

Casualties of the unrest included desperately needed affordable housing, grocery stores, and health clinics. Once-vibrant blocks were reduced to a charred wasteland of twisted metal. There was the surface parking lot that Sayles Belton and her girlfriends cleaned until their work gloves burst. And there was the popular Chicago-Lake Liquors, whose owner waved her in to look at the dregs of his store after everything of value had been stolen.

These days, there are signs that Lake Street is repairing itself. Cub Foods erected a temporary grocery tent in its parking lot while it rebuilt. The trashed Walgreens on Lake Street and 31st Avenue opened a mobile unit so residents no longer had to bus as far as Bloomington for medication. Artists painted murals on plywood-plastered storefronts.

Across the street from the Midtown Global Market, in the lot where the Roberts Shoes artist colony once stood, someone had put together a picnic table, a modest arrangement of raw two-by-fours—not much to look at, but a gesture of trying.

Traversing gullies in the sidewalk, jaw swaddled in a floral mask, the former mayor recalled how the neighborhood pooled its resources to buy and refurbish two houses near Oakland Avenue for the original Harriet Tubman Shelter for Battered Women. How there'd once been an abandoned building on 30th Avenue where sex workers solicited johns, in full view of kids lined up to catch the bus for school.

"When we first started working on the revitalization of Lake Street, the whole



SUSAN DU

corridor from Nicollet all the way to Chicago, this whole corridor was filled with prostitution, drugs, massage parlors, dirty bookstores, all that crap," says Sayles Belton. "That's what I inherited. And that's also what we, working together with these neighborhoods, ran out of our community so that we could have the opportunity to have"—she gestures up at the curly pink sign of La Michoacana Purepecha—"ice cream!"

It was also in her term that the Sears catalog distribution center for the entire upper Midwest closed down, costing the neighborhood thousands of jobs. The empty Midtown Exchange building was a crossroads, literally and figuratively, as prime a moment for community-led

rehabilitation as it was a temptation for speculative developers.

So Sayles Belton called up the late billionaire Carl Pohlad of the Minnesota Twins. She sold him a vision of Lake Street uplifting immigrant entrepreneurs, and got him to buy the building for the city. Today, it's the Midtown Global Market, a vibrant chimera of food stalls, shopping, and mixed-income apartments.

As business districts go, Lake Street can't compare to the economic engine of downtown, with its glassy maze of skyscrapers, but it did generate enough commerce to sustain a sense of place with a rhythm and a pulse.

That's changed now. On the other side of I-35W is a scorched post office. Rows

Ruhel Islam stayed at Gandhi Mahal until a fire in a neighboring building reached the gas line.

of small businesses, many of them Black-, indigenous-, and immigrant-owned, are destroyed.

"Everything they were hoping to benefit from, and we wanted them to benefit from, they'll be behind the eight ball," Sayles Belton says. As a former city planner, she can't divorce fact from the frustration of walking among the ruins of her own hard work.

To start anew, Lake Street must again court major outside investment. To rebuild and maintain its character, it would have

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to attract the attention of a specific kind of money that understands the ideology of the area—what it's done for new Americans since the turn of the 20th century, how much fight it's got left.

"It's all a part of the history of the people living here, working-class people, low-income people, just saying, 'We can do better, we know how to fight for what we want, and all we need is somebody to listen.'"

II.

In 1881, the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad laid tracks on what is now the Midtown Greenway bicycle highway. It brought manufacturing and industry, which pulled development into the southeast stretch of the city. Then came the Lake Street-Marshall Avenue bridge, which spanned the Mississippi River, marrying Minneapolis and St. Paul.

By the early 1900s, a streetcar network stitched city neighborhoods together, and an influx of Scandinavians and Greeks showed up, looking for jobs in the milling industry. They landed on Lake Street, opening shops, building churches and mutual aid societies like the Sons of Norway and Gustavus Adolphus Hall (now La Poblana Taqueria), designed "to demonstrate that Swedes were substantial citizens."

When Lake Street was new, cars were just starting to be mass produced. Auto lots up and down the street displayed the Model T. But with suburbanization came the decline of urban neighborhoods. After 1945, the G.I. Bill permitted white veterans to elevate themselves by going to college and taking out mortgages, while Jim Crow laws barred Black veterans from making use of those same benefits.

Minneapolis's streetcars were dismantled by 1954, furthering urban decline. Lake Street aged. Porn theaters like the Rialto and the Avalon moved into the neighborhood and drove down its value. When I-35W was built, it neglected to include access ramps to Lake Street, despite residents' hard-fought campaign to increase movement to the area. Construction crews had just begun building those ramps, 50 years on, when Lake Street caught fire this summer.

Decades of disinvestment meant commercial buildings stayed small and cheap to rent. When Mexicans and Central Americans arrived, followed by Somalis and other East African people, Lake Street reprised the role it had played for prior waves of European immigrants.

Cara Letofsky, a former Met Council member and local historian, chokes up as she tries to explain what sets it apart.

"Every time someone opens a small business, it's their livelihood. It's their dream. And that's what Lake Street gets to be for people, over and over again," she says. "That's what we need to keep our eye on



SUSAN DU

when we think about the rebuilding and what comes next, that it still remains that opportunity for people."

III.

In 2010, Maria Gali purchased a run-down building at 29th and Cedar, one abandoned more than a decade and inhabited by squatters, with plans to open a childcare center. It took five years to clean up the facilities and secure business loans—no easy task for a Mexican immigrant in a low-income neighborhood that had been written off as unlikely to pay tuition, Gali says.

Lenders who specifically gave to childcare startups didn't buy her business plan. The only financier that would back her dream of teaching multiculturalism and earth stewardship was the local BMO Harris Bank. An underwriter of many immigrant-owned businesses, it was recently trashed by protesters decrying capitalism.

Today, Circulos de Amigos looks after about 60 small children, down from its pre-COVID enrollment of 80. When the riots swept Lake Street, Gali sent everyone

Even with \$2 million in donations, Kelly Drummer (top) says MIGIZI is far from ready to rebuild. Former mayor Sharon Sayles Belton watched decades of transformation shaken in a single week.

home. She watched people setting fires and smashing windows on remote security cameras until she felt overwhelmed by helplessness and sought anxiety meds for the first time in her life.

Ultimately, the center was spared damage. But the children weren't. They returned to school asking, "If somebody does something bad, do they get shot?" and "Can we kill police?"

Gali and her daughter Tania Riviera broached the topic with a clip from *Sesame Street* and *Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice* by Marianne Celano. They made protest signs and led the students on a miniature sidewalk peace march, chanting, "We are the same, we need respect, we are children, we love everybody!"

Afterward, baseline levels of drugs and prostitution—which longtime residents tolerated—suddenly became untenable, the

women say. Dealers congregated behind Circulos de Amigos in large groups of 20 or more, attracting buyers from all over. The neighborhood was inundated with open sex, gunshots, needle use, and discarded crack pipes. They could no longer take the children on walks along the Greenway, and couldn't use their outdoor classroom, an open-ended play area, because strangers often camped there.

"Everyone passes the ball," says Riviera. "The police pass it on to the city council woman. The city council woman passes it to the judges. We understand all the injustice and inequities that have been done in the criminal justice system. It's just, how can repeat offenders be let out so often to return to the same neighborhoods, to continue to terrorize them, and also taint the youth?"

Neighbor Jeremy Gray bought a house on Lake and 18th Avenue after the Great Recession. The homeowners on his block hail from all over the world. Many have children around the same age who spend summers biking together up and down 18th.

This year, drugs overran the neighborhood. Groups of people would walk up from the Greenway, go to the Stop and Shop gas station to buy pipes and baggies, and leave trash in the street. Dealers sat atop cars, handing product to drivers who'd barrel off at 50 mph. Conflicts among them spilled into neighbors' yards. One day a car charged into a group sitting on the retaining wall in front of a house with three young children inside. Confrontation begat retaliation. Someone threw a rock through Gray's window, raining broken glass across the living room while his family watched TV. They did the same to an apartment unit at the opposite end of the street.

His sons have become fairly desensitized to the scene, Gray says. He'd let them out to play if there were just three or four dealers on the street, but not when there were six or seven.

Amid calls to dismantle the Minneapolis Police this summer, police units that investigated narcotics complaints with undercover work and search warrants ceased operation, according to emails that Kali Pliego, an MPD civilian crime prevention specialist, sent to residents. Beat cops who were supposed to drop in on businesses and get to know community members quit "proactive policing." They were only allowed to respond to pressing 911 calls.

"You all need to take charge of this situation. There is nobody 'out there' who will swoop in and save the day for you. 911 responders in acute situations, yes... but long term solutions have to be organic. I am truly sorry to have to say this to you," wrote Pliego.

She also gave the residents of 18th Avenue some context about their drug dealers. They're a group that's moved from block to block—from 15th to Bloomington to 16th—for more than a year. They stay as long as their intimidation works, but



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SUSAN DU

leave once residents organize and make it too hard for them to do their business.

Things came to a head when a neighbor's teenage daughter was mugged at gunpoint. About 50 people gathered on the Greenway bridge for an emergency meeting. Some were veterans. They wore long guns on their backs and pistols on their hips. Once the crowd reached critical mass, they made an impromptu decision to march down the street and push the drug dealers out. Nearby Capouch Iron Works donated large metal cattle gates, which were installed at both ends of the street, blocking traffic from all but immediate residents.

Luis Ortiz, owner of the New People's Community Garage auto shop on 18th, says constantly having to move the barricades back and forth makes his business marginally harder, but he doesn't fault the neighbors for taking security into their own hands.

In prior years, he'd call police about drug dealing right in front of his shop, but all they'd do was drive through with their bullhorns. The dealers would leave, then circle back. Recently, a customer dropped off a truck after hours, only to have its windows smashed and stereo extracted.

"After the mess happening on Lake Street, it was like 20 to 30 people from the moment I opened. When I leave, I leave, but the neighbors deal with it all night," Ortiz says. "They have kids, and I really felt bad for them because the kids come out to play, and they have to turn around with the people working there in front of their house. It was no life."

Neighbors formed an armed night patrol. They built gravel speed bumps in the street without the city's permission, and took time off work to guard their block around the clock. By and by, the drug dealers disappeared from 18th. But then conflicts arose around who would be leader, and who was putting more skin on the line for the comfort of all. The disagreements threatened the sustainability of the whole arrangement.

For now, Luis Ortiz doesn't mind moving barricades around his business.

The dealers eventually reconvened on 17th Avenue. Residents on both blocks are desperate for a solution.

Some neighbors, having had enough, are putting their houses up for sale. Gray doesn't want to run away.

"I don't want to leave everybody here, just up and, 'I'm done.' This is my home," he says. "But at the same time, even if I did leave, who would buy it? Why would anyone want to come here? So even if by some miracle I could sell the place, it wouldn't be enough to buy a house anywhere else."

Gali is also conflicted. Lake Street has been her home for nearly 20 years. The neighborhood has always suffered from a degree of neglect, and now she hears conspiracy theories about how the destruction was timed to clear out resident businesses in favor of mass redevelopment. She doesn't put much stock in those murmurings. At the same time, it's difficult to imagine how many small businesses would rebuild, particularly those that were uninsured, with some owners lacking social security documentation and therefore ineligible for federal funding.

Sometimes she tells her daughter they have no choice but to move. But then again, could Circulos de Amigos find success anywhere else? Their families are generous, compassionate people who value social justice, diversity, and nature, Gali says. They like seeing children play with natural resources in their outdoor classroom, building with water and sand, getting muddy in the summer, just being kids.

"I love the neighborhood. The people here in south Minneapolis are the people I want to work with. I don't think we can make it with our philosophy in Minnetonka, for example," Gali says. "So we are still here, but we are fighting back."



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IV.

Once the smoke settled, about a dozen people were federally charged with rioting and arson based on surveillance footage and social media. They include a Minneapolis man allegedly setting fire to a St. Paul car rental agency, and two men from St. Paul being prosecuted for torching the Minneapolis 3rd police precinct building. The others came from Brainerd, Brooklyn Park, Maplewood, Monticello, Ramsey, Rochester, Rosemount, Staples, Wayzata, and Galesburg, Illinois.

Despite the statewide origins of the accused, the Minnesota Legislature denied state funding to help the Twin Cities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency snubbed Gov. Tim Walz when he requested \$15 million toward rebuilding Lake Street. President Donald Trump said, during a recent visit to Mankato, that the aid was rejected as “punishment for being stupid because they could have stopped that if they let the police do what they’re trained to do.”

Lake Street Council, the area’s business association, quickly raised more than \$10 million from corporations and individual donors to distribute as grants. Thomson Reuters, where former mayor Sharon Sayles Belton now serves as VP of Partnerships

and Alliances, committed \$1 million to rebuilding and other basic needs.

But it’s nowhere near enough. More than 1,500 buildings in the Twin Cities were hit, totaling more than \$500 million in damage. That number doesn’t include inventory and job loss or the cost to rebuild, which will be significantly higher.

Parts of Lake Street remain a wasteland because demolition alone can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, with insurance typically covering just a small portion.

If Lake Street businesses had savings after three months of COVID-19, they certainly don’t have any now, says Lake Street Council president Allison Sharkey.

When the pandemic hit, many restaurants saw the writing on the wall and made the financial call to close rather than lose money. Contrarily, most of Lake Street’s mom-and-pops stayed open through sheer force of will. Many had invested their life savings, chosen to pay staff in lieu of keeping up with insurance premiums, and were entirely uncovered when their shops caught fire.

Sharkey says one troubling outcome may be that building owners—just to break even after rebuilding—will double the rent and displace longtime tenants. “At the same time, I’m concerned about the opposite effect, that there may be disinvestment, that people won’t be able to fully demolish and rebuild, and that it may sit there vacant

and blighted. I feel like this could go either way, that it might change block by block.”

Saving Lake Street requires galvanizing a hodge-podge of independent property owners around a shared understanding of what the area means to people, an idea that grows bleaker every day that the mountains of debris remain. According to business filings, most building owners are identified only as LLCs. The Lake Street Council knows many of the people behind them, but others are total mysteries.

V.

Before the riots, the intersection of Lake Street and 27th Avenue was a quiet peninsula of small businesses in owner-occupied buildings.

On the corner was the Odd Fellows building, just acquired by Ade Alabi in January. It had been home to Addis Ababa Ethiopian restaurant, El Nuevo Rodeo, and a MoneyGram, all reduced to rubble. Next door was Gandhi Mahal, a sustainable-sourcing restaurant pioneer that had a reputation for hosting nonprofit fundraisers for free, and MIGIZI, the Native American youth development center that had just raised \$1.6 million to build a sweeping new headquarters full of modern accoutrements.

During the riots, the American Indian Movement showed up to protect the area. Gandhi Mahal fed protest medics. Nevertheless, looters kept running in and out of the nearby money exchange. That building caught fire. The wind blew south. Once the post office lit up, business owners armed with fire extinguishers were no match for the conflagration pressing in from all sides.

“We’re all like deer in headlights,” says Kelly Drummer, the executive director of MIGIZI. Over the past few months, she raised \$2 million from 20,000 new donors around the world who were touched by their story as it appeared in the New York Times and Indian Country Today. Yet it will cost \$3 million more just to repair what they had.

“There has to be a major effort all the way around, to have a call out to investors that want to see small businesses here. Or it’s going to be where we can’t afford to rebuild, our land is vacant for years and years until we say, ‘Well, we give up because we can’t raise the money.’ And then it goes into the hands of the people that land has tended to always go to, these large LLCs, corporations, people that own a lot of properties because they have the money to invest. Someone could swoop in and say, ‘Hey, who can’t rebuild?’ And they’ll offer you a price, and that’s what happens, over and over again.”

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SUSAN DU

Despite this summer's unrest, MIGIZI still managed to train dozens of young people in their journalism and green energy programs, paying them nearly \$15 an hour. They're temporarily working out of the American Indian Center on Franklin.

One weekday afternoon, Drummer returned to MIGIZI. As she unlocked the door and gingerly walked inside, glass shards punctured the foam soles of her sandals. The space had the feel of what used to be an open concept studio, flooded with soft white light in lieu of a roof. Someone had stolen the refrigerator from what was left of the community kitchen. Discarded clothing suggested people had broken in to live there. In the back, a soundproof recording room once held brand new computers. A row of individual study rooms lined one wall.

No one ever used those, Drummer admits. After an agonizingly isolating pandemic, the kids want to sit together more than ever. When they rebuild, they'll do without some of those frivolities.

Some of the nonprofit's elder staff are having a terrible time moving on from the most beautiful home they ever had. Drummer draws motivation from the promises she's made that they'll have it all again.

"This has been the most challenging time in my personal and professional life," she says. "But it's just as the elders said, 'You're supposed to do this,' and so I know I can do it. If you don't have a vision of what it could be, or hope that it's going to be okay, then you really don't have anything."

Drummer's neighbor Ruhel Islam has the same idea. In the depths of the gutted Gandhi Mahal, he sees a blank canvas where he will draw his dream, and try to get it perfect the second time around. He's always pined for rooftop solar panels and better ventilation in the basement, where his aquaponics operation created far too much humidity for comfort. Those things weren't possible in his aging building.

Jeremy Gray's block took acting against drug dealers into its own hands.

The night the block caught fire, Islam stayed with Gandhi Mahal until the fire reached the gas line and neighbors pleaded with him to flee with his life. In the morning, his daughter called and broke the news that everything was gone, all the art he'd brought over from Bangladesh, his grandfather's photographs.

Islam grows quiet when the memories resurface. He doesn't want to revisit. He just wants to rebuild.

He has since rented a new space at 3025 E. Franklin Ave., the slightly dilapidated site of the former Chef Shack. One of the first things Islam did was install a new tandoori oven. He and his family are scrubbing and remodeling for a September opening.

Gandhi Mahal's placeholder will be called Curry in a Hurry, a quick-bite operation designed for pandemic dining. It'll serve spicy food to clear the nasopharyngeal passageway, ginger tea to keep the immune system strong. Islam wants to commission a mural along the east-facing wall, depicting a phoenix clutching takeout in one talon and chai tea in the other.

As he works, old customers drive by and honk.

Islam recalls that when he was a little boy in Bangladesh, ground zero for climate change, the rising seas would flood entire villages year after year. As soon as the waters receded, people would run out to the rice paddies, rebuilding and regrowing in order to harvest as much food as they could before the next disaster.

"So yes, we treat it as a blessing, and we look forward to doing it again," he says. "A lot of things are gone. They cannot come back, but we have to be strong. That is our mission and vision, to dream a big dream." 🌱

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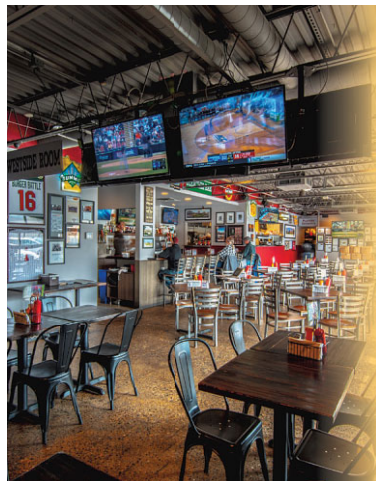
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A LIST



Paul Herwig and
Jennifer Ilse with
their dog Lila

RICHARD TSONG-TAATARI / STAR TRIBUNE

ONE LAST DANCE

Off-Leash Art Box goes out with a festival

BY JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

Coronavirus has claimed another small business. After two years in their brick-and-mortar space, Off-Leash Art Box will close their doors.

"We know the current situation [cannot] be sustainable for as long as the economic fallout is going [to] last," the announcement states, "and so we believe it's the responsible thing for Off-Leash Area to close the theater, and for [artistic directors] Jennifer [Ilse] and Paul [Herwig] to sell the building as soon as possible."

The space wasn't just a homebase for Off-Leash productions; it was also available to rent, providing a small venue for new works, group collabs, and other unique projects. Alanna Morris-Van Tassel, formerly of TU Dance, struck out on her own on the Off-Leash stage with *Yam, Potatoe an Fish!*, a deeply personal piece about her Caribbean heritage. Quirky shows like *Dread the Halls*, a horror-themed holiday cabaret, also made their way to the venue.

When Off-Leash Art Box opened two years ago, Ilse and Herwig had big plans to bring a little joy and entertainment to the Nokomis East neighborhood in south Minneapolis.

"We OWN it!" the original announcement proclaimed. "No landlords, no leases, we own our own destiny."

What they owned needed a little work, however.

"It was a dirty, stinky, just kind of cement open space," Ilse told us in 2018.

The building, originally an auto shop, had also served as a laundromat and a video store before sitting empty for eight years. Before opening, Off-Leash made repairs to the HVAC system, plumbing, and electricity, and installed the type of sprung flooring that dance companies use.

The good news: Off-Leash will continue as a creative entity. It's also worth noting that the group was nomadic for years before settling down in south Minneapolis. Before the Art Box, the can-do duo often turned garages and driveways into performance venues, hosted events on their self-proclaimed "micro-stage" in Longfellow, and took over other troupes' stages for an evening.

The final event in the space will be Inbox@ArtBox, a local choreographers' festival with Haus Dance that will feature indoor and outdoor stages, virtual elements, and site-specific pieces. It's scheduled to run October 1-4. [G](#)

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): In one of your past lives, maybe you were a Neanderthal midwife in what's now southern France. In another incarnation, you may have been a 17th-century Guarani shaman who shared your knowledge about local plants with an Italian Jesuit missionary in what's now Uruguay. All the powers and aptitudes you perfected in those and other previous ages could prove helpful as you cultivate your genius in the coming weeks. **JUST KIDDING!** Cancel my previous speculations.. For you Aries folks, past achievements are often of secondary importance as you create your future. In fact, your mandate is usually to transcend the old days and old ways. It may be better not to imitate or rely on old stories, no matter how dazzling. This will be especially true in the coming weeks.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "There are no ordinary feelings," says poet Dean Young. "Just as there are no ordinary spring days or kicked over cans of paint." That's always true, but it will be especially true for you in the coming weeks. I suspect you will be host to a wealth of interesting, unique, and profound feelings. They might be a bit overwhelming at times, but I think they will mostly provide rich opportunities for your soul to grow deeper and stronger and more resilient.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "There should be a science of discontent," said novelist Frank Herbert. "People need hard times and oppression to develop psychic muscles." I partially agree with that observation, but I also think it's a gratuitous cliché that's not at all absolute. In fact, our culture is under the spell of a mass delusion that tempts us to believe "no pain, no gain" is the supreme learning principle. I'd like to see the development of a robust science of contentment: how fascination and freedom and generosity can build psychic muscles. You'll be a good candidate to study that subject in the coming weeks.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Cancerian songwriter Mathangi Arulpragasam is better known by her stage name M.I.A. She has accomplished a lot in her 45 years on the planet, having been nominated for three Grammy Awards and an Academy Award. *Esquire* magazine named her the 75th most influential person of the 21st century. One key to her success is the fact that she formulated a clear master plan many years ago, and has used it to guide her decisions. In her song "Matangi," she refers to it: "If you're gonna be me, you need a manifesto / If you ain't got one, you better get one presto." I bring this to your attention, Cancerian, because the coming weeks will be an excellent time to formulate (or re-formulate) your life manifesto and master plan.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "If you're not invited to the party, throw your own," declares singer and actress Diahann Carroll. In the coming weeks, I urge you Leos to use that advice as a metaphor in every way you can imagine. For example, if you're not getting the love you want from a certain someone, give it to yourself. If no one hands you the opportunity you need, hand it to yourself. If you wish people would tell you what you want to hear, but they're not saying it, tell yourself what you want to hear. It's a time when you need to go beyond mere self-sufficiency. Be self-gratifying, self-rewarding, self-acknowledging.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "At the necessary moment, going naked will be your most convincing disguise," writes poet Dobby Gibson. As I apply his witty statement to your life, I'll interpret it metaphorically. My sense is that you could really use the kind of "disguise" he's talking about. What I mean is that you would benefit by appearing to be different from what people expect of you. You can gain key advantages by shifting the image you present to the world—by expressing a part of your identity that is not usually obvious. And I think the best way to do that is to "go naked"—i.e. be candid and transparent and vulnerable about your core truths.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Libran playwright Wendy Wasserstein wrote, "Every year I resolve to be a little less the me I know and leave a little room for the me I could be. Every year I make a note not to feel left behind by my friends and family who have managed to change far more than I." I recommend Wasserstein's practice to you, dear Libra. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to launch this ritual as an annual tradition. For best results, write it out as a vow. I mean take a pen and paper and compose a solemn pledge, then sign it on the bottom to seal your determination.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "I may not lead the most dramatic life," confesses singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright, "but in my brain it's War and Peace every day." He was referencing Leo Tolstoy's sprawling, exuberant 1,200-page novel *War and Peace*, which features stories about five families who lived through Napoleon's invasion of Russia in the 19th century. I'm guessing that these days your fantasy life may also be filled with epic fairy tales and heroic sagas and tear-jerking myths. Is there a problem with that? Not necessarily. It could be quite entertaining and educational. I do recommend that you keep your actual life a little calmer and saner, however.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "I rejoice to live in such a splendidly disturbing time!" said author Helen Keller (1880-1968). She was a smart activist who worked hard in behalf of women's equality, labor rights, antimilitarism, and socialism. Was she being sarcastic in saying she loved being alive during a time of upheaval? Not at all. She derived excitement and vigor from critiquing injustice. Her lust for life soared as she lent her considerable energy to making life on earth more enjoyable for more people. I invite you to consider adopting her attitude in the coming weeks. It's a good time to experiment with generating the personal power that becomes available by taking practical action in behalf of your high ideals.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You know what perfectionists are: people who obsessively strive to finesse every last detail, polishing and honing so compulsively that they risk sucking all the soul out of the finished product. In contrast to them, I propose that we identify a different class of humans known as imperfectionists. They understand that a ferocious drive for utter purity can make things sterile and ugly. They resolve to cultivate excellence while at the same time they understand that irregularities and eccentricities may infuse their work with beauty. I hope you'll act like an imperfectionist in the coming weeks, Capricorn.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "Everything good I've ever gotten in life, I only got because I gave something else up," writes author Elizabeth Gilbert. To that melodramatic declaration, I say, "Really? Everything? I don't believe you." And yet I do think she has a point. On some occasions, the most effective strategy for bringing good new influences into our lives is to sacrifice an influence or habit or pattern we're attached to. And often the thing that needs to be sacrificed is comfortable or consoling or mildly pleasurable. I suspect that the coming weeks will offer you one of these opportunities, Aquarius.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "I and me are always too deeply in conversation," confessed philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. I wonder why he said "too deeply" and not just "deeply." Did he mean his dialogs with himself distracted him from important matters in the world outside of his imagination? Was he implying that he got so consumed while conducting his self-interviews that he lost his bearings and forgot what his goals were? With these cautions in mind, Pisces, I invite you to dive into an intense but spacious communion with yourself. Make this a delightful and illuminating conference, not a raging debate or a debilitating argument.

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TEA PARTY

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Swift horse
- 5 “Stille ____”
- 10 Prospecting props
- 14 Risk battle?
- 15 Tree-lined area
- 16 Too many to wrap your head around
- 17 ____ gaze
- 18 “Lord of the Flies” boy turning on the waterworks?

- 20 Notes in some margins, maybe
- 22 French sociologist Durkheim
- 23 One shy of four-and-a-half games of golf?
- 27 Fat meas.
- 30 “You got me?”
- 31 Cuts the crop
- 32 Realty units
- 34 NRA symbol
- 35 Part of a meter
- 36 Strapping young lads, collectively?
- 42 Birds drawn with glasses in cartoons
- 43 Best Actor of 2002
- 44 Sea anemone
- 46 Curving shot in many trick pool shots
- 47 Slangy turndown
- 50 Squeeze (out)
- 51 “Get out of here, shrimp!”?
- 54 Death Star shot
- 56 A Russian in Georgia, e.g.
- 57 Men who are definitely NOT the marrying type?
- 62 Small change
- 63 Problem solved by Dr. Mom

- 64 Vocally bother, puppy-style
- 65 Woman’s name that means “light”
- 66 Pre-toothbrushing rinse
- 67 “My Hero Academia” genre
- 68 Speech therapist’s challenge

Down

- 1 Private assemblies
- 2 Marshall stack mover
- 3 Claim without proof
- 4 “Yuuuuuuck”
- 5 Saigon’s home, briefly
- 6 R&B singer Lennox
- 7 “Love Island” network
- 8 Red Monopoly purchases
- 9 “I might be game”
- 10 Milkmaid’s container
- 11 Linear equations subject
- 12 Oft-spiked Christmas drink
- 13 Wallower’s home
- 19 Where Fibonacci was born
- 21 Go off the beaten path
- 24 Cracker with a stethoscope
- 25 In great shape
- 26 Place to get free screwdrivers
- 28 Brief letter
- 29 ID with a UPC-like code
- 33 ____ planning
- 34 Independent jeweler’s website
- 36 Be gloomy
- 37 “Star Wars” creature that has a penchant

- for eating humans
- 38 “Praise the Lord!”
- 39 Prefix with while
- 40 Upbeat
- 41 Singer with the best-selling album of the 21st century
- 45 “I’m over here!”
- 46 See 55-Down
- 47 Campania’s capital
- 48 Is of use to
- 49 Towelette that comes with wings
- 52 OutKast song that Rolling Stone said sounded like “an indie rock Little Richard”
- 53 Do well at
- 55 With 46-Down, co-captain of United States women’s national soccer team
- 57 Man about town, back in the Victorian era
- 58 Leather-smithing tool
- 59 Wire letters
- 60 Orange tuber
- 61 ____-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec

Last Week’s Answer

O	R	I	G	A	M	I		R	A	W	N	E	S	S
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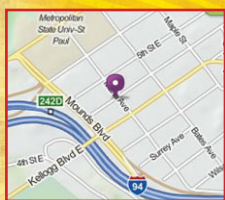


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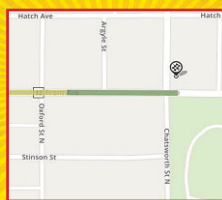
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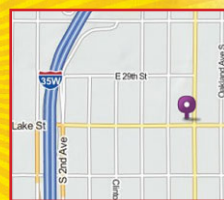
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Am I going to be trapped
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Dan Savage

I'm a straight man who's been dating a woman for not quite four months. In the beginning things were light. But two weeks in she revealed serious abandonment issues and began asking whether I really loved her. She demanded reassurance that I wasn't going anywhere and she wouldn't be "just a single chapter" in my life. After a month, I met her seven-year-old son, her parents, and her ex. Then we had a pregnancy scare. She told me if she was pregnant she would keep it because then I'd have to stay. I voiced that we'd been dating for very a short time and this wasn't a good time for either of us to have a child. (She wasn't pregnant, luckily.) Even before this incident, my body had started to manifest signs of anxiety: upset stomach, sleepless nights, loss of appetite. So I summoned up all of my courage—conversations like this are extremely difficult for me—and told her I couldn't do this anymore. She cried and begged me to give her a second chance; I wound up spending the rest of the weekend at her place and agreed to stay. But I didn't feel good about it. When I finally got back to my place, I felt anxious, confused, hollow, and hopeless. I tried to end things again after speaking to my therapist but she won't take no for an answer and brings up the promises I made about loving her. I hate this and feel terrible for her son. Any thoughts on how to dismantle this? Or do I just need to run?

PASSIONATE REASSURANCES EXTRACTED SO
SOON UNDOES RELATIONSHIP EXIT

As I explained to a reader in a similar situation...

"We need someone's consent before we kiss them, suck them, fuck them, spank them, spoon them, marry them, collar them, etc. But we do not need someone's consent to leave them. Breakups are the only aspect of our romantic lives where the other person's consent is irrelevant. The other person's pain is relevant, of course, and we should be as compassionate and considerate as possible when ending a relationship. (Unless we're talking about dumping an abuser, in which case safety and self-care are all that matters.) But we don't need someone's consent to dump them."

Voice that it's over, **PRESSURE**, then refuse to get drawn into negotiations. It's over. If she needs to cry on someone's

shoulder, she'll have to call a friend. If she brings up the promises you made after she "revealed" her abandonment issues weeks into this relationship, apologize for not being strong enough to resist her obvious—if subconscious—efforts to manipulate you. She shouldn't have asked you to swear undying love after you'd known each other such a short time and you shouldn't have made the promises you did. You failed her and yourself by not telling her it was too soon for that shit—to say "I love you," to know whether she would be a chapter in your life, to meet her son (!), her parents (!!), and her ex (!!!).

Demands for premature reassurances of everlasting love, like all demands for premature commitments, are intended to make exiting the relationship more difficult. And while I'm not calling your girlfriend an abuser, demands for premature commitments are often red flags for abuse. Your girlfriend weaponized her insecurities to extract a premature commitment from you. And she involved her son in that effort, which is unconscionable. (While that's on her, you should've refused to meet her son so quickly and seen her desire to introduce you to him as a red flag. You should be seeing someone for at least six months to a year—well out of the honeymoon phase if not quite into the farting-in-front-of-each-other phase—before being introduced to your new partner's kid(s).)

When someone you've only recently started dating says, "Will you love me forever?," the correct answer is never, "Of course I will!" The correct answer is, "I think you're a wonderful person and I want to keep seeing you but we can't know—at this stage—what the future will bring." If they respond by saying, "You know what? You're right," keep seeing them. If they respond by melting down and bringing up their abandonment issues, well, they've demonstrated they aren't someone you want a future with.

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